



**Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government**

**Matthew Pennycook MP**  
*Minister of State for Housing and Planning*  
2 Marsham Street  
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Cllr Steven Broadbent  
County Hall  
Walton Street  
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Buckinghamshire  
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13 February 2026

Dear Councillor Broadbent,

I am writing further to my letter of 5 September 2025 in which I requested that Buckinghamshire Council ('the Council') undertake an Advisory Visit with the Planning Inspectorate prior to the launch of your Regulation 18 consultation, with a view to ensuring that this consultation would make a meaningful contribution to progressing your plan.

I acknowledge the Council's efforts in undertaking an Advisory Visit in September, and in subsequently delivering a Regulation 18 consultation between 17 September and 29 October 2025.

As you know, this government firmly believes that the local development needs of areas such as Buckinghamshire are best addressed through a plan-led approach. Buckinghamshire is currently covered by local plans inherited from its former district areas, all but one of which are more than five years old, meaning they contain policies that may be out-of-date.

As things currently stand, the Council cannot demonstrate a five-year housing land supply in any of the former district areas covered by these inherited local plans, putting Buckinghamshire into the presumption in favour of sustainable development. As a result, there is a high likelihood that development will come forward on a piecemeal and speculative basis, with reduced public engagement and fewer guarantees that it will make the most of an area's potential. These points underline the importance of Buckinghamshire getting an up-to-date plan in place as soon as possible, something that the Council has not yet achieved six years on from its formation.

Last year, the Council had to adopt a revised Local Development Scheme ('LDS') after failing to meet the timetable set out in its 2020 LDS. The Council's current LDS commits you to a Regulation 19 pre-submission consultation in "July/August 2026" as a next plan step, before submitting the plan for examination in December 2026, which is the deadline for the current plan-making system. There is no leeway within your current plan timetable for these milestones to slip, or for additional consultations to be undertaken beyond those already scheduled. In this context, it is notable that the Council has not yet made any site allocations available to the public, nor has it published a number of key evidence base documents.

In light of the Council's history of poor performance with plan-making, including failure to adhere to previous versions of your LDS, I am concerned there is significant risk that the Council could once again fail to meet its own milestones. I therefore believe it is necessary to direct you to implement a measurable timetable that firms up your stated commitment to submitting a plan by 31 December 2026.

With regards to local plan timetables, section 15(4) of the Planning and Compulsory Act 2004 ('the 2004 Act') provides that: *"the Secretary of State may direct the local planning authority to make such amendments to the scheme as he thinks appropriate for the purpose of ensuring full and effective coverage (both geographically and with regard to subject matter) of the authority's area by the development plan documents (taken as a whole) for that area"*.

**For the reasons set out above, I have concluded that to ensure full and effective coverage of the Buckinghamshire Council area by a development plan, I am justified in using the Secretary of State's powers provided in section 15(4) of the 2004 Act, and I am subsequently directing Buckinghamshire Council to publish on your website a revised Local Development Scheme by 11 March 2026 which includes the following specific milestones:**

- Regulation 19 consultation to commence by no later than 23 July 2026;
- Submission of the plan for examination should be no later than 31 December 2026.

I am aware that the Council has already registered an interest in further support from the Planning Inspectorate towards the end of February. I would strongly encourage you to formalise this to ensure that you are well-placed to make swift progress towards your next plan milestones.

My officials will continue to engage with your officers to ensure you remain on track with the preparation of your plan, and I expect any potential issues to be flagged to MHCLG at the earliest opportunity. Should a significant delay occur against the milestones set out in your revised Local Development Scheme, I will consider whether I need to take any further action.

I can revisit my decision to direct your Council at any time if I consider this is justified. If you believe there are reasons why intervention is not appropriate, please can you advise me of these exceptional circumstances as soon as possible and no later than 28 February 2026.

Yours sincerely,



**MATTHEW PENNYCOOK MP**  
Minister of State for Housing and Planning